



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE HELPS BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES NAB 48 INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN SMUGGLING RING**

*-AIRLINE EMPLOYEES AND CORRUPT OFFICIALS AMONG THE ARRESTED-*

**MIAMI-** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Brazilian Federal Police (DPF), and the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) announced today that a 16-month international human smuggling investigation culminated this morning with the arrests of 48 individuals linked to a international smuggling ring operating out of Brazil and stretching as far as Miami, Mexico City, Amsterdam, and Bangkok.

More than 600 DPF officers in Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Governador Valadares and Ipatinga conducted the operation. In addition to the arrests, the officers also carried out over 100 search warrants throughout various locations in these cities.

The individuals arrested included officers from the DPF, Brazilian Customs, airline personnel and others thought to be part of an organization that had been smuggling foreign nationals in and out of Brazil and onward through Mexico to the United States.

“Uncovering and halting criminal activities that, if left unchecked, would threaten the national security of the U.S., Brazil and other nations is and will continue to be a top priority for our agency,” said Jesus Torres, special agent-in-charge of ICE in Miami. “The success of this international operation exemplifies of our willingness and committed to assist countries around the globe in their fight against crime.”

“This case is a classic example of how international police cooperation can lead to the dismantling of major human smuggling organizations, said Julio Velez, ICE attaché in Brazil. “The cooperation received in this case from the Brazilian Federal Police is a testimony to the fantastic relationship developed between our two governments.”

Mr. Torres thanked the ICE Attaché in Mexico, the Spanish National Police, the German National Police, the Dutch National Police and the Bolivian National Police for their invaluable assistance in the investigation.

The international investigation into the case continues. Brazil’s Federal Public Ministry is handling the prosecution of this case. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial and the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*